DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 479 166 SO 035 053

AUTHOR	Veugelers, W.; Kat, E. De
TITLE	Moral and Democratic Education in Public Primary Schools.
PUB DATE	2003-04-00
NOTE	21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (84th, Chicago, IL, April 21-25, 2003).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Citizenship; Comparative Education; Delphi Technique; *Democracy; Educational Environment; Educational Research; Elementary Education; Ethical Instruction; Foreign Countries; National Curriculum; *Public Schools; *School Culture
IDENTIFIERS	*Identity Formation; *Netherlands

ABSTRACT

In primary and secondary education in the Netherlands, 30% of the schools are public, and 70% are private. Both private and public schools are state funded and must follow the national curriculum. Within this context, schools can develop their own identities and teaching methods. With regard to the identity of public education in the Netherlands, three formal legal characteristics are generally mentioned. These characteristics, anchored in the constitution and educational law and shared by all public schools, are: (1) a public school is managed by the government; (2) public education is open to all; and (3) public education is actively diverse. Students develop their identity in relation to their environment. A research project used the Delphi method, by analogy with earlier research into the pedagogical task of education. In three rounds, through written questionnaires, group discussions, and panel discussions, the desired and actual implementation of the pedagogical identity of public education was explored at two pilot schools. Data were collected among students (n=147), parents (n=58), and teachers (n=11). Critical democratic citizenship refers to active participation by all, considerable social concern, and a careful analysis of different views and perspectives. This research shows that these elementary schools make a good start in this respect, but the interaction between individual and group should be less of one adapting to the group norm, mostly set by the teacher, and a more dynamic interaction in which everyone can participate. Critical democratic citizenship demands a strong involvement with others, a concern that is based on an emotionally perceived sense of togetherness. (Contains 32 references and 4 tables.) (BT)

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ED 479 166

Moral and Democratic Education in Public Primary Schools

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Paper presented at the Annual conference of AERA, April 21-25 2003, Chicago

What is the pedagogical identity of a school? What are the parents', students' and teachers' perceptions of this identity? How do students, parents and teachers judge the way the school is presently implementing its pedagogical responsibilities? Which new ideas have all those concerned about the pedagogical identity of the school? In the Netherlands, denominationalism is greatly influencing the educational system. In primary and secondary education, 30 of the schools is public, and 70% is private (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Montessori or another pedagogical tradition). Both public and private schools are state funded and have to follow the national curriculum. Within this context, schools can develop their own identities and teaching methods.

Pedagogical identity of public education

The term identity is generally associated with the ideological (religious or philosophical) foundation of a school. Besides the so-called ideological identity, one usually distinguishes an educational identity, the choice for a pedagogical didactic school of thought like for instance Montessori, Jenaplan or traditional education. This educational and pedagogical didactic identity is colored by the ideological identity. With regard to the identity of public education in the Netherlands, three – formal legal – characteristics are generally mentioned These characteristics, that are anchored in the constitution and educational law and are shared by all schools for public education, are: A public school is managed by the government; Public education is open to all; Public education is actively divers.

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Active diversity and democratic education

The term active diversity not only stresses the differences between people, but also what they have in common, what binds them. Precisely because public education goes beyond the varying ideologies, it can, more so than a school with a religious or philosophical foundation, focus on humanity as a whole and on society as a whole. In our view, a public school is oriented towards its environment, towards society. This school is not introverted, but focuses on interaction with the outside world. This school prepares its students for active participation in society; in the school, the student is already trained for this participation. This view matches what in other countries is called 'democratic education'. This educational vision, developed especially in the US and in England, proposes public education that at the same time is a reflection of society and prepares the student for that society. It focuses on a student participation that is being realized through real stimulation of the students' autonomy and through an intense relationship of learning in school and extracurricular learning (Goodman, 1992; 1995; Apple & Beane, 1996; O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). The approaches of the Child Development Project also incorporate many of these elements. From that project we have derived several research instruments (Watson, Battistich & Solomon, 1997).

Citizenship

Education prepares students for their future: in work, private life and society. The task of the educational system to prepare youngsters for working life is hardly controversial, especially with regard to knowledge and skills. Preparation for private life is primarily seen as a task of the family. Preparation of youngsters for functioning in society has always been seen as a task of education, but has received varying attention and has had different consequences in the course of time. Preparation for work, private life and society might be distinguished analytically, but in the educational practice these domains overlap. There is a transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes between the domains. Whether a student use this knowledge, these skills and attitudes depends on the context and the personal motivation and will. Thinking about preparation for society is at present lumped together as 'education for citizenship' (Giroux, 1989; Van Gunsteren, 1992). Several types of citizenship may be distinguished: the adaptive type, the calculating citizen, and a critical democratic citizenship. A critical democratic citizenship implies autonomy, social concern, critical thinking and acting (Veugelers et al, 2001). In out view, the pedagogical identity of public education should focus on developing a critical democratic citizenship.

Living together and mutually shaping society

These tow entities, living together and mutually shaping society, can be recognized in many educational goals and school subjects. Pedagogical goals are made concrete within the subjects and within the culture of the school. Working on pedagogical goals is not limited to a single subject, but encompasses various subjects. Based on our theoretical framework we have chosen to distinguish three domains in which the pedagogical identity of public and open education can be expressed:

- Qualification for society
- Active diversity
- Active participation

Qualification for society

Education tries to prepare students for functioning in society, now and in the future. This means that, besides reading and writing and maths, students also learn about society. This learning concerns not only acquiring knowledge and skills, but also the development of values (attitudes, opinions and behavior), especially justice and social involvement. This qualification for society express the kind of citizenship one finds important.

Active diversity

The school is a reflection of (a part of) society. It is desirable that the diversity in society will also be found in the school and that the students are prepared for a diverse and multicultural society: on learning to deal with differences. The school wants to optimize the development of each child.

Active participation

Active participation and involvement of the parents, students and teachers with education, ensures that the school functions as a community and that there is a close relation between the school and the community that it belongs to.

Students develop their identity in relation to their environment. Public education seeks to develop both sides of this relation – the individual student and the environment. Personal development encompasses the cognitive, the social, the affective, the esthetic, and the ethical domains. The focus on the environment means that the personal life of the student is being involved in education, and that there is much attention for the community of the student and the school, the local community and society as a whole.

The school prepares the students for functioning in society. The development of knowledge about society, of skills needed in order to function in that society, and the personal involvement and will to use this knowledge and these skills, are becoming more important as

pedagogical goals. The school is a reflection of society and as such the school may be seen as a training ground for personal, social development and functioning in society. Characteristic for public education is the focus on society as a whole, the preparation of students for active participation in society and seeking a balance between personal and social development of the students. Schools can only work on these educational policies in a dialogue with all those concerned: teachers, parents and students.

Planning and implementation of the research

For this research project we use the Delphi method, by analogy with earlier research into the pedagogical task of education (Veugelers & De Kat, 1998; 2003). In three rounds – written questionnaires, group discussions and panel discussions – the desired and actual implementation of the pedagogical identity of public education is explored at two pilot schools. Data are collected among students, parents and teachers. Working with three Delphi rounds enables us to present the findings from the first round (questionnaires) again to all those concerned during the second round (group discussions). Each group can also react on the findings in other groups. This way, a school profile can be made of a desired pedagogical vision and approach, as well as a description of present practices and their effects. The differences between ideal and reality can be analyzed and the possibilities and impediments for realizing the ideal vision and approach can be outlined.

Implementation of the research

Research was conducted at two public primary schools during one school year. These were a school in a rural district in the northeast of the Netherlands and a school in the urban agglomeration of western Holland. At both schools, the students from groups 7 and 8 (age 11 and 12), their parents and their teachers have participated. Table 1 presents an overview of the number of respondents in the first Delphi round.

Table 1. Number of respondents

	School 1	School 2	All
Students	64	83	147
Parents	28	30	58
Teachers	4	7	11
All	96	120	216

Students filled in the questionnaire in the classroom. Afterwards, each student received a questionnaire for parents to take home. The response of the parents was 39%, 58 out of 147. During the second Delphi round, group discussions took place with students, parents and teachers. De discussions with the students took place in the classroom, with all students present. Several parents indicated that they wanted to participate in the group discussion at the school. The group discussions with the teachers took place during a team meeting (10 teachers and one school manager). During the third Delphi round we held a panel discussion in both schools, in which some students, parents, the teachers of groups 7 and 8, and the school management participated.

Characteristics of the respondents

Students. The number of participating boys (53%) and girls (47%) does not differ much. Of a total of 147 students, 21 were not born in the Netherlands. These students (14%) all visited the school in the rural agglomeration.

Parents. Of the questionnaires that have been completed by the parents, 65% was completed by the mother and 35% by the father. Like the students, the majority of the parents were born in the Netherlands (74%). The parents' educational level varies significantly, from primary education only to university degree. Most parents held a diploma in secondary or higher vocational training. The parents in the rural northeast of the Netherlands were on average slightly higher educated than those in the western urban area.

Teachers. Of the responding teachers, 27% was male and 73% female. Most teachers had considerable experience in teaching. All of them worked for at least three years in primary education. The average teaching experience was between 17 and 18 years.

The pedagogical identity and research instruments

Building on the tradition of public education, supplemented with some notions from Democratic Education, we distinguish three domains: preparation for society, active diversity and active participation. These domains form a conceptual framework that is further detailed in a questionnaire. This instrument with closed answer alternatives, seeks to assist schools for primary education in clarifying their vision on the identity of the school and in getting an indication of the extent to which the implementation of that vision had been realized. We will work out the desired goals and the learning effects that have been realized. A number of the scales we have developed, were used in earlier research (Veugelers & De Kat, 2000). We

also use research instruments of the American Child Development Project (CDP) (Watson, Battistich & Solomon, 1997) that we have used before in our research into pedagogical values in primary education (Vogel, Klaassen, Ten Dam & Veugelers, 1999).

	Disere	Realized	effects	Experience
1. Qualification for society				
▪ Pedagogical goals	x		x	
▪ Learning goals	x		x	
▪ Classroom supportiveness	x		x	
▪ Social competence	x		x	
▪ Concern for others	x		x	
2. Active diversity				
Cultural and religious diversity	x	x		
3. Active participation				
▪ Students autonomy and influence	x	x		
▪ Relations parents and school	x	x		
4. Other pedagogical effects				
▪ School culture	x			x
▪ Enjoying school	x			x
▪ Judgment about the teacher	x			x

Qualification for society

Within the domain of qualification for society, five elements are being distinguished: pedagogical, learning goals, classroom supportiveness, social competence, and social concern.

Pedagogical goals

In earlier research we have distinguished five clusters of pedagogical goals:

- Moral values (honesty and being trustworthy)
- Personality development (self-confidence and being responsible)
- Socialization (consideration for and concern for others)

- Critical thinking (reflection and forming of opinion)
- Discipline (obedience and organizing one's own work).

The sequence of these five goals is based on the following theoretical reasoning. Moral values are the most fundamental values (Oser, 1994). Next come the personal emotions and self-concepts, being the the self-regulating aspects of identity. A human is by definition a social creature; an individual has to relate to his environment. This relation to the environment is more than just adapting to that environment, it can also means distance and autonomy (critical thinking). A society and parts of it, like a school, might impose limitations, might demand compliance with norms (disciplining). For our questionnaire, each of these five clusters has been made operational in two items. Students, parents and teachers have been asked to twice classify the ten educational goals, once to indicate the extent to which students indeed learn this in school (realized), and once according to the importance attached to these goals (desired).

Learning goals. Besides these general pedagogical goals, we also inquired the learning goals in the area of preparation for society. Within that area, the social normative qualification is very important. This concerns not only knowledge and skills, but especially attitudes (values) that the school seeks to develop in its students. In other words: the type of citizenship that the school tries to develop. Learning goals related to social issues like political participation, environment, social behavior in and outside the school etcetera. Of interest is also the question how the pedagogical goals and social issues relate to academic goals like sums, reading and writing. With the exception of these cognitive goals, all other goals concern the development of attitudes with students.

The students, parents and teachers have been asked to indicate, on a five-point scale, ranging from 'not' to 'good', to what extent these skills are actually learnt in school and to what extent they consider them to be desirable. All other scales are similar five-point scales and inquire into the actual and the desired situation.

Classroom supportiveness (CDP). To what extent are students involved with each other and do they help each other? This relates to items like: supportiveness and solidarity in the classroom, having respect for each other and caring for each other. This is a scale of the CDP.

Social competence (CDP). When preparing students for functioning in society, the school, as a reflection of that society at a smaller scale, offers students the opportunity to acquire and train the necessary skills. These skills include the ability to cheer up others, to cooperate with others and to solve problems.

Concern for others (CDP). Where social competence mainly involves the acquisition of skills, corcern for others regards attitudes. Social competence relates to the skill of how to

behave social, concern for others relates to the will to indeed show that behavior. This part of the questionnaire is about the students' involvement with the well-being of other students and other people. Social competence as well as concern for others not only means the preparation for society, but also the participation and functioning of students in school. Both measurements can be seen as effect-measurements.

Active diversity

Cultural and religious diversity in education. This scale concerns the attention that teachers pay to the perception and development of students' own cultural and ethnic background and the dialogue with other cultures and ideologies in a divers (school) community. Parents and teachers are asked to voice their opinions on the actual and desired attention for this in the school.

Active participation

Student autonomy and influence (CDP). To what extent are students independent and do they participate actively? Which role do students play when arrangements are made for rules or work? Are they allowed to show initiative?

Relations parents and school. Active participation of parents in the school assumes regular contact between parents and teachers in order to exchange information about the student's functioning, the pedagogical actions of teachers and the school policy with regard to pedagogical and academic issues.

Other pedagogical effects

In this research, several effects are measured. Some of these effects can be placed in a direct relationship with the educational goals. Others are expressions of active participation. These measures for pedagogical effect are: the perceived school culture, the students' enjoying school and the judgments about the teacher.

School culture. For examining the attitudes, values, norms and conventions within the participating schools, we have included three scales from the 'School Culture Scale' (Higgins-D'Allessandro & Sadh, 1997) in our questionnaire. These scales have also been used in several previous studies (Veugelers & De Kat, 1998; Vogel et al, 1999; Veugelers & De Kat, 2000). They are: relation teachers and students; mutual relations of students; the 'normative' behavior of students.

Enjoying school. Enjoying going to school is an important indicator of the students' well-being. Students who indicate that they do not enjoy going to school, are less motivated and fail to attend more often than students that do enjoy school (Derriks & De Kat, 1999). To examine the students' functioning in school, we have used the scale 'Enjoying school', which was taken from the School Questionnaire (Smits & Vorst, 1999).

Judgment about the teacher. What are the characteristics of an ideal teacher and how are these related to increasing the active participation of students? The teacher characteristics that these items refer to, like respect, stimulating independence, consideration for students etcetera, have been taken from research into the students as a mirror for teachers (Veugelers & De Kat, 2002).
In table 2 we give information about the scale constuction.

Table 2: Scale construction

	*	N items	students	parents	Teachers	all
Learning goals						
• Social Behavior	A	6	α = .70	α = .74	α = .73	α = .71
	D	6	α = .63	α = .76	α = .63	α = .66
• Contact with peers	A	6	α = .78	α = .84	α = .85	α = .80
	D	6	α = .75	α = .88	α = .71	α = .78
• Academic	A	6	α = .63	α = .82	α = .80	α = .67
knowledge and skills	D	6	α = .68	α = .68	α = .83	α = .68
Cultural Diversity	A	7		α = .90	α = .66	α = .88
	D	7		α = .88	α = .92	α = .88
Active participation	A	9	α = .85	α = .91	α = .81	α = .86
• Autonomy	D	9	α = .86	α = .86	α = .71	α = .88
• Classroom	A	9	α = .85	α = .89	α = .88	α = .77
supportiveness	D	9	α = .83	α = .86	α = .82	α = .84
• Social competence	A	9	α = .79	α = .92	α = .91	α = .84
	D	9	α = .80	α = .87	α = .88	α = .82
• Concern for others	A	7	α = .80	α = .83	α = .90	α = .84
	D	7	α = .83	α = .90	α = .96	α = .86
Schoolculture						
• Relation teachers	A	6	α = .76	α = .85	α = .82	α = .78
and students	D	6	α = .82	α = .87	α = .80	α = .83
• Mutual relation of	A	5	α = .74	α = .85	α = .88	α = .77
students	D	5	α = .90	α = .92	α = .90	α = .90

* A = Actual
D = Disered

▪ 'Normative' behavior of students	A D	5 5	α = .80 α = .80	α = .91 α = .72	α = .87 α = .70	α = .83 α = .78
Judgment about the teacher	A D	9 9	α = .76 α = .82	α = .85 α = .81	α = .81 α = .73	α = .79 α = .82
Enjoying school		8	α = .75	α = .79		α = .76
Parents and school						
▪ Informing parents	A D	3 3		α = .89 α = .92	α = .94 α = .90	α = .90 α = .92
▪ Listening to parents	A D	3 3		α = .84 α = .77	α = .16 α = .42	α = .82 α = .72
g pedagogical action at at school	A D	4 4		α = .77 α = .57	α = .82 α = .82	α = .79 α = .59

5. Results

Effects procedure in the school

Through the questionnaire, the group interviews and the panel discussion, a dialogue was started between parents, teachers and students about the desired pedagogical identity of the school and the actually realized identity. Through the questionnaire, all students and teachers and a large group of parents could voice their opinions about a broad range of topics. The findings from the questionnaire offer the school a systematic overview of the desired and realized identity and possible differences between the groups that participated. These findings could next be expanded on during the group discussions and possible solutions could be explored. The merit of the panel discussions for the schools was mainly the dialogue between the groups. According to teachers, parents and students, this approach has most certainly led to a further raising of consciousness and has re· ·alized existing plans and sometimes generated new initiatives. Both schools plan to di..cuss the findings of this research during a parents' meeting. The involvement of many students in this research has been high. When we visited the school again for the group discussions, the students were still aware of our intentions and some of them spontaneously told us that they appreciated the fact that students could voice their opinions.

Pedagogical identity public education

Which pedagogical identity in public education is sought by teachers, parents and students? To what extent are they successful in realizing that pedagogical identity in the school? Which

discrepancies exist between the desired and the realized identity? Which plans do teachers, parents and students make for better realizing the desired pedagogical identity?

Qualification for society

Pedagogical goals

Students, parents and teachers have been asked to classify ten educational goals in two lists. First according to the extent that students learn this pedagogical goals in school; the actual situation. Next according to the importance that the school ought to attach to the goal; the desired situation. Table 3 provides an overview of these classifications for all respondents and for the different groups of respondents from both schools.

Table 3 .Hierarchy pedagogical goals

	n = 216 all		n = 147 students		n = 58 parents		n = 11 teachers		n = 96 school 1		n = 120 school 2	
	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D
Honesty	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	6	2	1	1	1
Consideration for others	2	2	2	2	**3**	**6**	3	2	1	2	2	4
Organizing one's own work	3	5	3	4	5	7	**1**	**4**	3	5	3	5
Being trustworthy	4	4	5	5	4	5	9	7	5	4	4	3
Obedience	**5**	**8**	4	6	8	9	8	10	**4**	**8**	6	8
Being responsible	6	6	8	7	2	2	2	3	6	7	8	6
Self-confidence	**7**	**3**	**6**	**3**	6	4	6	5	**8**	**3**	**5**	**2**
Forming of opinion	8	7	7	8	**7**	**3**	**4**	**9**	7	6	7	7
Reflection on opinions of others	9	9	9	9	10	10	**7**	**1**	9	10	9	9
Concern for others	10	10	10	10	9	8	10	8	10	9	10	10

A = Actual
D = Disered

Honesty, responsibility and consideration for each other are important educational goals for parents, teachers and students. The teachers put a lot of effort in teaching students to organize their work and to obey. Especially the teachers themselves believe that this is costing them to much effort.

Parents would like more attention for 'forming of opinion'; they propose this by reasoning that students have to be more independent and should resist peer pressure more. Teachers on the other hand prefer more attention for 'reflecting on others' opinions', because students field give their views much too easily and do not undertake a serious analysis of other views, and they conform strongly to group opinion. Parents as well as teachers will therefore encourage the forming of the students' own opinions. The parents put the emphasis on encouraging independent forming of opinion, the teachers on an analysis of various views and perspectives.
Students find it very important that they learn to assert themselves in all kinds of situations. Being assertive seems to be a more direct variation of the parents' wish that they form their own opinions more. Students are mainly concerned with their position within the group. Remarkable is the discrepancy between the much desired 'consideration for each other' and the less desired 'concern for others'. All groups show a considerable difference between the more functional consideration for each other and the more moral involvement with each other.

This research shows three lines of approach with regard to independence and opinion:

- The parents' plea for an actual independence of students, also in relation to their peers (autonomy)
- The teachers' plea for a better analysis of different views (critical thinking, changing perspective)
- The students' plea to assert themselves more; they realize that this happens in a social context (empowerment)

These three lines of approach have in common that they relate to the interaction between individual and environment and that all three of them aim for an active involvement of the individual in his own development of identity, but also in relation to others. The differences between the three lines concern the ways in which this relation is approached. In the autonomy approach, distance is emphasized; in the change of perspective approach, the involvement with others, and in the empowerment approach a strengthening of the individual position in relation to others.

The other results are summarized in table 4.

Table 4: Scores for students, parents and teachers

		Students N = 147		Parents N = 58		Teachers N = 11		All N = 216	
			s.d.		s.d.		s.d.		s.d.
Learning goals									
▪ Social Behavior	A	3.5	.79	3.3	.66	3.3	.58	3.4	.75
	F	4.3	.60	4.2	.59	4.1	.50	4.3	.59
▪ Contact with peers	A	3.6	.83	3.4	.79	3.8	.66	3.6	.82
	F	4.2	.75	4.4	.62	4.6	.33	4.3	.71
▪ Academic knowledge and skills	A	4.0	.63	4.1	.60	4.1	.45	4.0	.61
	F	4.3	.64	4.6	.39	4.5	.41	4.4	.59
Cultural diversity	A	--	--	3.1	.94	3.2	.48	3.1	.87
	F	--	--	3.6	.82	3.9	.52	3.7	.79
Active participation	A	2.8	.92	2.6	.80	2.7	.65	2.8	.88
• Autonomy	F	3.9	.83	3.3	.66	3.1	.49	3.7	.83
	A	2.9	.88	2.4	.80	3.0	.76	2.8	.88
▪ Classroom	F	3.9	.79	3.6	.66	3.8	.51	3.8	.75
supportiveness	A	3.6	.67	3.2	.75	3.3	.59	3.5	.70
▪ Social competence	F	4.4	.58	4.3	.55	4.2	.40	4.4	.57
	A	3.2	.94	4.2	.65	4.3	.71	3.5	.98
▪ Concern for others	F	3.0	1.09	3.9	.98	3.8	1.17	3.2	1.13
Schoolculture									
▪ Relation teachers and students	A	3.8	.70	3.6	.67	4.0	.51	3.8	.69
	F	4.5	.64	4.4	.58	4.5	.37	4.5	.61
▪ Mutual relation of students	A	3.0	.91	2.8	.78	2.9	.50	2.9	.86
	F	4.2	.79	4.3	.54	4.3	.39	4.3	.71
▪ 'Normative' behavior of students	A	3.0	.85	2.8	.83	2.9	.84	3.0	.84
	W	2.0	1.23	1.5	1.01	1.3	.35	1.8	1.17
Judgment about the teacher	F	4.1	.54	3.8	.57	4.1	.33	4.0	.55
	W	4.6	.48	4.6	.38	4.6	.29	4.6	.44
Enjoying school	F	3.9	.69	4.2	.57	--	--	4.0	.67
Parents and school									
▪ Informing parents	f	--	--	4.1	.82	4.3	.73	4.1	.80
▪ Listening to	w	--	--	4.6	.59	4.5	.48	4.6	.57

	parents	f	--	--	3.4	.89	3.8	.33	3.5	.83
•	Attuning	w	--	--	4.3	.58	4.0	.40	4.2	.56
	pedagogical action	f	--	--	3.0	1.05	3.6	.81	3.1	1.03
	at home and at	w	--	--	4.0	.78	4.3	.59	4.0	.75
	school									

Learning goals

The learning goals, more than the pedagogical goals, refer to educational activities. The learning goals are reduced to three scales: 'social behavior' (in society), 'contact with peers' and 'academic knowledge and skills'. Students, parents and teachers attach much importance to all three groups of learning goals. What students actually do learn, differs enormously for the three groups of learning goals. A fair amount of attention is paid to 'academic knowledge and skills' and to 'contact with peers'. But the development of social behavior receives relatively little attention. Learning social behavior is, remarkably, an even higher priority for the students than for the teachers and parents. We understand social behavior as: caring for the natural environment, being interested in what happens in the world, knowing how you should behave in different situations etcetera.

During the group interviews, the parents have asked for more projects and extracurricular activities. The teachers thought it more useful to integrate attention for social behavior in the regular lessons, for instance in text comprehension. Students prefer to talk about a wide range of subjects with their peers and with the teacher; they ask for classroom discussions.

Very remarkable was that students make a strong distinction between mutual contacts in the classroom and contacts outside the school. Outside the school there are no school conventions. The 'no-man's-land' between school and home really occupies their minds. In a positive way, they learn to assert themselves; in a negative way it is the area where the law of the jungle rules and where students in very emotional ways try to secure a strong position. Parents and teachers desire a stronger pedagogical role for the neighborhood through interconnected services, but especially through informal contacts.

Social competence

Developing social competence is important to everyone. Social competence is understood here as: being able to cheer up another person, findings ways to solve arguments, sharing things with others, cooperation etcetera. The students believe that they learn these things quite well in school. Parents and teachers believe that social competence could be improved. We will not present the data on the scale 'concern for others' because students had difficulties with the questions. A lot of them had two negotories in the questions. For future research we will formulate new items.

Active diversity

The desired and also the actual attention for this is rather limited. The main explanation seems that parents make the choice for public education because that type of school does not work from a single cultural and ideological vision and students are confronted with various views and learn to make their own choices. Therefore cultural and ideological aspects are less important to those concerned. The question is, though, whether teaching students to make their own choices does not in fact require more attention for cultural and ideological aspects.

The teachers are also aware of the fact that they assemble people from different cultural backgrounds. Parents indicate that the cultural differences play no role within the school, but that these differences complicate contacts between students outside the school because of different rules, habits and living environments.

Active participation

Students. As a third element of the pedagogical identity of the public school we have identified active participation of students. Next to preparation for society and cultural and ideological diversity, is active participation of students an indispensable element of burgeoning critical democratic citizenship. In this research, we have expanded on this active participation mainly with regard to independence and supportiveness. Especially mutual supportiveness is highly desirable to the parents, students and teachers, but not much of it is actually realized. Independence is something that especially the students want! Parents find it important too, but they also believe that the demands on students in this respect are sometimes too high. Teachers point out that the students often believe too quickly that they can do things on their own. All groups agree that the active participation of students in school can be increased.

Parents. Active participation of parents in the school is strictly speaking not part of the school's pedagogical identity, but parents and others around the school form a community that influences the students' development. Harmony or partnership of parental education and school education enhances the cohesion of pedagogical support for children. Active participation of the parents in the school also offers students an example of an active critical citizenship, even democratic citizenship when the parents feel involvement with the development of all children.

As in earlier research (Veugelers & De Kat, 1998), we have noticed a split here within the group of the parents. One part of that group is actively involved with the school and helps out a lot. This group makes demands with regard to teaching and believes that teachers ought to listen more to parents. The other group of parents hardly reacts to signals from the school and does not cooperate in research like the present. Teachers are often critical of the pedagogical

efforts of some of these parents, but they fail to communicate with them about these things. The parents that show no involvement with the school, arouse much irritation with the active parents. In some cases the parents do come to school with less verbal activities like preparing food for a school party. From the point of view that as many parents as possible should be involved with the school, all activities that succeed in bringing them to the school ought to be stimulated.

Other effects pedagogical identity

School culture. Here we mainly look at the actual findings. Students, parents and teachers are very positive about the contacts between teachers and students. The contacts between the students themselves are judged less positively. All groups believe that the school culture should be further improved.

The teacher. Students, but also the parents, are very positive about the pedagogical and didactic qualities and attitudes of the teachers. Teachers are seen as respectful, honest, supportive, they explain well, show interest etcetera. The teachers themselves are quite pleased in this respect. Still, progress is possible here. The level of the desired qualities of the teacher is extremely high.

Enjoying school. Students, parents and teachers all believe that the students enjoy school. There are differences though between the students themselves. Some students enjoy school very much, others are less satisfied.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Critical democratic citizenship refers to an active participation by all, considerable social concern and a careful analysis of different views and perspectives. This research shows that these primary schools make a good start in this respect, but the interaction between individual and group should be less one of adapting to the groupnorm, mostly set by the teacher, and more a dynamic interaction in which everyone can participate. Critical democratic citizenship demands a strong involvement with others, a concern that is based on an emotionally perceived sense of togetherness. This social involvement should be increased. Besides this affective component, attention is also needed for acquiring the skills to participate in that social interaction. Students need to learn better meaning making and how to carefully weigh up views and perspectives and need to acquire the skills for asserting themselves.

Conclusions and recommendations for the schools

1. Among the elements of the pedagogical identity of the public school as distinguished by us, the *active participation of the student in the school* and the focus on a *critical democratic participation in society* play important roles. Both elements are recognized by all those concerned and are often expanded in specific ways. The possibilities for a better realization of these elements in public primary education need further exploration.
2. In the pedagogical identity as described by teachers, parents and students, there is attention for academic knowledge and skills, for the development of *social behavior*, as well as for dialogue between students. When we look at the differences between the desired and realized effects, they appear to be small with regard to academic knowledge and skills, but larger for the contacts between students and even more so for the development of social behavior. More than schools do at present, schools ought to work at the development of social behavior through special projects in school and extracurricular activities. This partly involves the development of adequate learning material and methods, partly it means that teachers have to support each other with practical tips, visiting each others' lessons and through joint reflection on the moral criteria in their practice.
3. The proposed increased cooperation between *teachers* will hopefully have a positive effect on the pedagogical actions of every teacher and has as a side effect that the team of teachers can offer a better *moral and social example* for students. The students will then see and experience the advantages of a caring community where people are involved with each other and support each other.

4. A similar *critical democratic community* ought to be stimulated in the classroom. The contacts between the students at both schools are not that bad, but not as good as teachers, parents and students would like to see. The mutual contacts between students are most certainly the weakest element of the school culture. Much can be improved in this respect. Teachers and students ought to indicate clearly how they perceive others' behavior and how they could support each other in trying out new behavior.

5. Remarkable is the contrast between consideration for each other and involvement with each other. The more functional 'consideration' is especially for the students more important that the social moral 'concern'. The *social concern* with each other might be improved through cooperation in the development of social behavior, but also through the classroom dialogues as proposed by the students.

6. The attention for *cultural and ideological diversity* is rather limited. While working on one of the principles of public education, active diversity, more attention should be paid to processes of meaning making and to various perspectives within those. Meaning making not only relates to the philosophical domain, but also to the domains of critical thinking and functioning in society. This attention for meaning making in a diverse society is possible in the subject 'humanist ethical education', but also in academic subjects like languages, mathematics, history, geography and the arts.

7. Parents would like to see an increased autonomy of students in relation to their peers; teachers launch a plea for a better analysis of different views, and students would like to strengthen their own positions in relation to others. These aspects of *critical thinking* must be connected. Having students analyze a theme from different perspectives might accommodate these desires for distance and attention for other opinions. The individual position of a student in relation to others might also be better underpinned cognitively and affectively.

8. The *active participation of students* is especially desirable for the students themselves and their parents. The teachers are more reserved in this respect. But, together with students and parents, the teachers should explore the possibilities of an increased active participation of students.

9. The information of the *parents* by the school is, according to the parents, well organized. The parents believe though that the teachers should listen more to them. Teachers ought to have more discussions with the parents about teaching and the children's functioning in school. Parents as well as teachers need to have the feeling that they work together in educating young people. The participation on non-active parents should be stimulated through non-cognitive activities (e.g. preparing food for a school party or sports day).

10. We have now again presented new tasks for teachers, or better said intensified existing tasks. The *conditions* for undertaking these tasks are in need of improvement, in national educational policy as well as in school policy.

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